

Testimony IN SUPPORT of:

H.B. No. 5004 - AN ACT IMPLEMENTING EARLY VOTING;

Raised S.B. No. 1057 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE AND EARLY VOTING;

Raised S.B. No. 1064 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY VOTING;

S.J. No. 29 - RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING;

H.J. No. 1 - RESOLUTION APPROVING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING;

Raised H.B. No. 6693 - AN ACT CONCERNING ABSENTEE VOTING

Feb 21, 2023

Dear Senator Mae Flexer (Co-Chair), Representative Matt Blumenthal (Co-Chair), Ranking members Senator Rob Sampson and Representative Gale Mastrofrancesco and esteemed members of the Government Administration & Elections (GAE) Committee:

My name is Diana Evans. I am a voter from Wethersfield and a member of the Advisory Board of Common Cause.

Thank you for all you have done to protect and expand the freedom to vote in Connecticut. Your collective leadership paved the way for Connecticut voters to change the course of history in our state on Election Day, November 8th, 2022. We wish to extend congratulations to each of you—since as you know voters decided by a very strong 60% majority that Connecticut is now the 47th state to allow Early Voting.

As you undertake the work of finalizing proposed legislation to implement Early Voting—and as you prepare to vote on whether to adopt the proposed resolution to amend the state constitution to allow for No-Excuse Absentee Voting, as well as on improving the absentee ballot counting process—I urge that you:

- Pass legislation **that designs and fully funds** Connecticut's first-ever Early in-person Voting system by March, 2023 to give town elections officials time and resources to incorporate any budgetary changes in advance of the 2023 municipal election cycle. Provide at least **two weeks of Early Voting that includes weekend and evening hours**—with the requirement that **higher population towns provide multiple locations** in addition to the office of the registrar.
- Adopt the proposed resolution for Connecticut **to join 35 other states that allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting**—for a required second time by simple majority in both chambers during this 2023 legislative session. This cannot wait until a 2024 short session when legislative time constraints will be severe. Voters need to know right away if No-Excuse Absentee Voting will be on the statewide ballot in 2024.
- Pass legislation that allows: (1) the municipal clerk to deliver absentee ballots to the ballot counters before or at six o'clock p.m. on the day of an election; (2) **notification of voters whose absentee ballots may be rejected due to a defect so that voters can either correct the defect or vote in person**; (3) prepaid postage for the return of absentee ballots; (4) absentee ballot applications that have been completed and signed to be public records subject to public inspection.

There are too many stories of people in large cities becoming discouraged and leaving their polling place due to long lines; of people who cannot vote at all because they work two or more jobs with little time flexibility; people who rely on others for a ride to the polls that may not be available, and so on. Allowing ample evening and weekend hours along with no-excuse absentee voting will allow all our citizens the maximum opportunity to vote by removing the barriers imposed by restrictive voting hours and absentee voting requirements.

Thank you,

Diana Evans
Wethersfield